

Exodus 16 - Thursday, November 6th, 2008

- In chapter 15, we learned of the first recorded worship song in the Bible, then witnessed the tree turning bitter water sweet at Marah.
- In chapter 16, the Israelites leave Elim for the Desert of Sin and complain that there's nothing to eat, so God provides them with manna.

16:1 And they journeyed from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came to the Wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they departed from the land of Egypt. 2 Then the whole congregation of the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness.

- It's interesting that they would leave Elim for the Wilderness of Sin because the children of Israel will greatly sin against the Lord here.
- Also, it's only been a month since leaving Egypt, and there's already a pattern of murmuring developing in the Israelites towards Moses.
- This is now the third time they have bitterly complained after leaving Egypt; first at the Red Sea, then Marah, and now here in "Sin!"

Psalm 106:7-12 Our fathers in Egypt did not understand Your wonders; they did not remember the multitude of Your mercies, but rebelled by the sea; the Red Sea. Nevertheless He saved them for His name's sake, that He might make His mighty power known. He rebuked the Red Sea also, and it dried up; so He led them through the depths, as through the wilderness. He saved them from the hand of him who hated them, and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy. The waters covered their enemies; there was not one of them left. Then they believed His words; they sang His praise. NAS

3 And the children of Israel said to them, "Oh, that we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat and when we ate bread to the full! For you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."

- Apparently the Israelites have some fond memories of eating very well during their harsh slavery in Egypt. Maybe they are delusional.
- Then, incredibly, they, for the second time, accuse Moses of brining them out to the wilderness to kill them by starving them to death.

- One has to wonder what Moses is thinking about right now. We are not off to a good start here. Maybe this wasn't such a good idea.
- What makes their reaction so utterly incredulous is that here-to-fore they witnessed the plagues, Red Sea, and the miracle at Marah.

- It's just remarkable how that in the second month of their exodus, they couldn't remember the miracles but couldn't forget the meals.
- The fact of the matter is that while they accuse Moses of killing them by hunger, God actually wants to teach them with their hunger.

"Animals are often taught through their food. When they could not be reached in any other way, they have been instructed by their hunger, and by their thirst, and by their feeding."

Charles Spurgeon

4 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you. And the people shall go out and gather a certain quota every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in My law or not. 5 And it shall be on the sixth day that they shall prepare what they bring in, and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily."

- This is the God we serve, instead of fire and brimstone raining down on them, He has bread rain down on them. What amazing grace.
- This is a beautiful picture of God's amazing grace and unspeakable mercy in not paying the Israelites as their complaining deserved.

- Notice though that there is a test woven into this gracious provision of bread raining from heaven, as to whether they obey or not.
- It seems that this blessing of "Bread from heaven," came with a responsibility of obedience and would test Israel on the sixth day.

- It's interesting to note that God usually called it "Bread from heaven," but the Israelites named it, "Manna," which means; "what is it?"
- Well, "what is it?" "What is what?" What is Manna?" It's not "what is Manna, it's Who is Manna?" "What is Manna is Who is Manna?"
- Yes; Manna, or "Bread from heaven," is none other than the person of Jesus Christ sent from the Father in heaven to give life.

John 6:32-35 32 Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. 33 For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." 34 "Sir," they said, "from now on give us this bread." 35 Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty. NIV

MANNA	JESUS
Came from heaven	Was sent from heaven
Given to them supernaturally	He is given to us supernaturally
Came down little and small	Came down as a child, little and small
Came at night	Born at night
Came down round, with no beginning and no end	Came down as the Alpha and Omega, no beginning and no end
Was pure and white	Is perfectly pure and made us white as snow
It is initially unrecognized in the natural, "what is it?"	We don't initially recognize Him in the natural
Tasted sweet like honey	Turns the bitterness of our sin (Marah) to the sweetness of our salvation
Came on the dew, untouched by the earth	Came to the earth, but was untouched by the world
It came down to where they were at	Meets us right where we are at
They had to bend down to get it	We have to humble ourselves to receive Him
They had to partake of it and eat it	We partake of Jesus, in remembrance of Him

They had to gather it and receive it that day	Today is the day of our salvation
They needed it every day	We need Him every day
It could only be found early in the morning	Early in the morning do we rise up and seek Him, while He can be found
It required diligence to get it	He rewards us who diligently seek Him
Despised by the "mixed-multitudes"	Despised by the "non-believers"

"God would supply day by day, but before the Sabbath Day they were to get enough for two days. Manna is that which represents Christ as the Bread of Life who came down from heaven to give His life for the world. Jesus Christ is the true Bread. He is the one who gives us life and sustenance. In Deuteronomy 8:4 we find that during the forty years that the Israelites wandered in the wilderness their feet did not swell. I have been told by a medical missionary that one of the causes of foot-swelling in the Orient is an improper diet. It is interesting that the manna had all the vitamins they needed to keep their feet from swelling as they journeyed through the wilderness. The manna was adequate to meet their needs."

J. Vernon McGee

"What did manna taste like? Jewish legends have their own spin: "One only had to desire a certain dish, and no sooner had he thought of it, then manna had the flavor of the dish desired. The same food had a different taste to everyone who partook of it, according to his age; to the little children, it tasted like milk, to the strong youths like bread, to the old men like honey, to the sick like barley steeped in oil and honey." But they also say that manna was bitter in the mouth of Gentiles."

Louis Ginzberg

6 Then Moses and Aaron said to all the children of Israel, "At evening you shall know that the LORD has brought you out of the land of Egypt.7 And in the morning you shall see the glory of the LORD; for He hears your complaints against the LORD. But what are we, that you complain against us?" 8 Also Moses said, "This shall be seen when the LORD gives you meat to eat in the evening, and in the morning bread to the full; for the LORD hears your complaints which you make against Him. And what are we? Your complaints are not against us but against the LORD."

- Notice how Moses clarifies a misnomer on the part of the Israelites. Their complaints weren't against Moses, they were against God!

9 Then Moses spoke to Aaron, "Say to all the congregation of the children of Israel, 'Come near before the LORD, for He has heard your complaints.'"10 Now it came to pass, as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud. 11 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,12 "I have heard the complaints of the children of Israel. Speak to them, saying, 'At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread. And you shall know that I am the LORD your God.'"

- It's important to know that God isn't rewarding their complaining, rather He's demonstrating His mercy and faithfulness to provide.
- This is evidenced by how the Lord has Moses tell them that when they're filled with food, they'll know that "I am the Lord your God."
- Also, this was God's way of saying that you can not only know Me, but you can rely on Me, to feed you with manna when you're hungry.

Deuteronomy 8:2-5 2 Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way in the desert these forty years, to humble you and to test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands. 3 He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD. 4 Your clothes did not wear out and your feet did not swell during these forty years. 5 Know then in your heart that as a man disciplines his son, so the LORD your God disciplines you. NIV

13 So it was that quails came up at evening and covered the camp, and in the morning the dew lay all around the camp.14 And when the layer of dew lifted, there, on the surface of the wilderness, was a small round substance, as fine as frost on the ground.15 So when the children of Israel saw it, they said to one another, "What is it?" For they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them, "This is the bread which the LORD has given you to eat.16 This is the thing which the LORD has commanded: 'Let every man gather it according to each one's need, one omer for each person, according to the number of persons; let every man take for those who are in his tent.'"

- This is where manna got its name by the Israelites asking; "what is it?" Moses answers them and says that it's the bread from the Lord.
- They then gather an omer, which is believed to be an imprecise measurement of as little as one cup and as much as one gallon.
- Also, Quails were a very delicious bird and considered a delicatessen to the Egyptians, then the manna would come in the morning.

"They had the best of meat and the better than the best of bread. No king's table was better spread than theirs. Rest assured He who fed murmurers will not desert believers."

Charles Spurgeon

Can you imagine how much food this was? Even with just the manna alone! One commentator suggested the following; "If an omer was six pints in size, and the children of Israel numbered two million, which is conservative by most estimates, God would have provided 4,500 tons of bread daily, or enough to fill ten trains with thirty boxcars each. Our God is a God of abundance!"

17 Then the children of Israel did so and gathered, some more, some less. 18 So when they measured it by omers, he who gathered much had nothing left over, and he who gathered little had no lack. Every man had gathered according to each one's need. 19 And Moses said, "Let no one leave any of it till morning." 20 Notwithstanding they did not heed Moses. But some of them left part of it until morning, and it bred worms and stank. And Moses was angry with them.

- Notice that those who obeyed never went without, and those who disobeyed couldn't use what they had stored up because it stunk.
- It's also interesting to note that Moses was angry with them. While this may be the first time he becomes angry, it won't be the last.

21 So they gathered it every morning, every man according to his need. And when the sun became hot, it melted.

- So why would it melt in the afternoon and only be available in the early morning? There may be both physical and spiritual reasons.
- Physically and practically, this would have instilled a healthy work ethic in the Israelites. In other words, they couldn't procrastinate.
- Spiritually this had practical application in how we need to rise up early in the morning and seek Him while He can still be found.

22 And so it was, on the sixth day, that they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for each one. And all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses. 23 Then he said to them, "This is what the LORD has said: 'Tomorrow is a Sabbath rest, a holy Sabbath to the LORD. Bake what you will bake today, and boil what you will boil; and lay up for yourselves all that remains, to be kept until morning.'" 24 So they laid it up till morning, as Moses commanded; and it did not stink, nor were there any worms in it. 25 Then Moses said, "Eat that today, for today is a Sabbath to the LORD; today you will not find it in the field. 26 six days you shall gather it, but on the seventh day, the Sabbath, there will be none."

- Here God is sort of forcing them to trust Him by gathering twice as much before the Sabbath to teach them to rest from their works.
- When we get to chapter 20, we may take a closer look at what the Sabbath meant to them back then and what it means to us now.
- Suffice it to say that the Sabbath points to how we enter Christ for our Sabbath rest in that our salvation is not dependant on our works.

27 Now it happened that some of the people went out on the seventh day to gather, but they found none. 28 And the LORD said to Moses, "How long do you refuse to keep My commandments and My laws? 29 See! For the LORD has given you the Sabbath; therefore He gives you on the sixth day bread for two days. Let every man remain in his place; let no man go out of his place on the seventh day." 30 So the people rested on the seventh day.

- Here we have the first mention of workaholics. They think they can get ahead by working on their day off, but come up empty handed.
- The Lord takes this quite seriously, not only is this full on greed, it is also a demonstration of their disbelief in and disobedience of God.

31 And the house of Israel called its name Manna. And it was like white coriander seed, and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey. 32 Then Moses said, "This is the thing which the LORD has commanded: 'Fill an omer with it, to be kept for your generations, that they may see the bread with which I fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you out of the land of Egypt.'" 33 And Moses said to Aaron, "Take a pot and put an omer of manna in it, and lay it up before the LORD, to be kept for your generations." 34 As the LORD commanded Moses, so Aaron laid it up before the Testimony, to be kept. 35 And the children of Israel ate manna forty years, until they came to an inhabited land; they ate manna until they came to the border of the land of Canaan. 36 Now an omer is one-tenth of an ephah.

- The Lord commands Moses to keep some manna as a Testimony for future generations. This would later be in the Ark of the Covenant.
- Notice that Israel ate manna for forty years but when they came to the border of the land of Canaan, God stopped providing this way.
- It's almost like this is God's way of saying that now His provision would come through normal hard work, but that He would still provide.

Lessons I can learn from Exodus chapter 16:

1. Like with the Israelites developing a sinful pattern of murmuring, so too can we find ourselves in the Desert of Sin when we complain.

“Every time Israel murmured, the glory of God appeared. This tells us that God does not like griping, complaining, and fault-finding. The church is filled with complaining Christians. If you are in a church where you have to murmur, complain, and gripe, get out and go somewhere else. You should be very careful when you begin to gripe about things at church. Are you griping about the preacher because he is not as friendly as you think he ought to be, or because he did not shake hands with you last Sunday? ... Are you murmuring against him? Aren't you really against him because he teaches the Word of God and represents God in your church? Sometimes we preachers murmur, too, and we all should be careful that we are not murmuring against God. This is one thing that God does not like.”

J. Vernon McGee

2. Like with the Israelites remembering what they ate while in Egypt's slavery, so too are we prone to think it was better in the world.

“With shameful readiness they ran to a low-minded form of complaining. There was no spirit in them. The flesh pots and the bread were all they thought of; the brick-making and the whips they overlooked. It is easy to make out the past to have been bright when we wish to find fault with the present.”

Charles Spurgeon

3. Like with the Israelites, so too do Red Sea miracles only have a momentary impact on us because they are soon gone and forgotten.
4. Like with the Israelites forgetting the plagues, Red Sea and Marah, so too do we forget, which is perhaps why Jesus said; “remember.”
5. Like with God pouring down bread from heaven on the Israelites, so too does God not pay us as our sin deserves and provides for us.
6. Like with God's provision to Israel being a test for Israel, so too may God test us with that which He provides for us to see if we obey.
7. Like with the “Bread from heaven,” being all they needed, so too is Jesus Christ our “Bread from heaven,” and is all I will ever need.
8. Like with the Israelites complaining against God when they complained against Moses, so too is this true for us when we complain.

“We think it a small thing to murmur against parents and friends, but this sheds a new light upon the matter. It is clear that a discontented heart really murmurs against God Himself.”

Charles Spurgeon

9. Like with God hearing the Israelites complaining and providing, so too will the Lord meet our needs though not reward our complaints.
10. Like with God teaching the Israelites to trust Him to always provide for them, so too will the Lord need to teach us to always trust Him.
11. Like with the Israelites not recognizing God's provision when it came, so too are we prone to question; “what is it?” It's the Lord!
12. Like with the Israelites disobeying God and gathering more manna, so too does our disobedience breed worms that make it stink.
13. Like with the manna melting away by the afternoon, so too do we see our devotion time for God's Word melt away by the afternoon.
14. Like with the Israelites going to work on their day off, so too will we come up empty handed when we try to work seven days a week.